

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

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AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 178

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS USMISSION NATO, DIA WASHDC, USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN
GER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: MARIO SOARES' ASSESSMENT OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) LISBON 0155, (B) LISBON 0036

SUMMARY: SOARES TOLD ME THE PS LAUNCHED ITS ELECTION CAMPAIGN
WITH SALGADO ZENHA'S SPEECH OF JAN 8; STRATEGY IS TO HOLD THE
CENTER WHILE INCREASING WORKER SUPPORT. COMMUNISTS WILL NOT
GAIN MORE THAN 10 PERCENT. SOARES HAS INFORMATION SOVIETS
DISSATISFIED WITH CUNHAL AND MAY REPLACE HIM. SOARES IS
INCREASINGLY CONCERNED WITH WHAT HE CONSIDERS TO BE INTEM-
PERATE ACTIONS AND NEEDLESS INTRANSIGENCE BY PPD LEADER
SA CARNEIRO. TWO PARTIES NEED TO COMMUNICATE BETTER. AMONG
ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED IS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. SOARES
ASKED THAT I URGE SA CARNEIRO TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE. END SUMMARY.
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1. SOARES CALLED ON ME AT HIS REQUEST JAN 9. AMONG OTHER THINGS HE SAID HE WANTED TO REVIEW INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS WITH ME.

2. SOARES SAID THE POLITICAL SITUATION HAD NOW STABILIZED. PPD WAS STILL FUSSING ABOUT RESPONSIBILITIES OF SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FINANCE (REFTEL A) BUT MAJOR ISSUES ON CABINET RESHUFFLE HAD BEEN RESOLVED. THE COMMUNISTS WERE FURIOUS AT HAVING BEEN BOXED IN IN AGRICULTURE AREA BY DESIGNATION OF SOCIALIST SUB-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE (REFTEL A).

3. AS I WAS AWARE, COMMUNISTS WERE NOW BEGINNING A CAMPAIGN TO STIMULATE POPULAR DISSATISFACTION ON ECONOMIC ISSUES. AT MEETING YESTERDAY OF THREE PARTIES CONVENED BY PRESIDENT, SOARES HAD ISSUED AN ULTIMATUM TO THE COMMUNISTS; EITHER THEY SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT OR GET OUT. SOARES HAS INFORMATION FROM AN EASTERN EUROPEAN SOURCE THAT SOVIETS ARE NOW DISSATISFIED WITH CUNHAL AND ARE THINKING OF REPLACING HIM. SOVIETS ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN SEEING THAT PCP STAYS IN GOVERNMENT.

4. SOARES EXUDED CONFIDENCE THAT THE COMMUNISTS WOULD NOT RECEIVE MORE THAN 9 OR 10 PERCENT OF THE VOTE DURING THE ELECTIONS. SOCIALISTS HAD USED EVERY POSSIBLE TACTIC INCLUDING CONTACTS WITH ITALIAN AND SPANISH COMMUNISTS TO ISOLATE PCP AND CUT DOWN ITS SUPPORT. THEIR CAMPAIGN STRATEGY WAS TO HOLD ONTO THE CENTER WHILE MAKING NEW INROADS INTO COMMUNIST LABOR STRENGTH. SALGADO ZENHA'S SPEECH JAN 8 WAS OPENING SHOT IN THE CAMPAIGN. ZENHA'S COMMENT HE WAS NOT A MARXIST WAS AN EFFORT BY THE SOCIALISTS TO APPEAL TO POLITICAL CENTER. SOCIALIST EFFORTS IN UNION AREA CONTINUED TO BEAR FRUIT; SOARES WAS JUBILENT ABOUT MOST RECENT SOCIALIST VICTORY IN CLERICAL WORKERS ELECTIONS (SEPTTEL).

5. SOARES THEN CAME TO WHAT WAS OBVIOUSLY THE REAL PURPOSE OF HIS CONVERSATION. HE WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED BY ERRATIC AND NEEDLESSLY INTRANSIGENT BEHAVIOR OF PPD LEADER SA CARNEIRO. SA CARNEIRO TENDED TO TAKE RIGID POSITIONS FROM WHICH HE THEN HAD TO RETREAT. THIS WAS CAUSING PROBLEMS FOR EVERYONE, INCLUDING THE PPD. SA CARNEIRO WAS ALSO MOODY AND CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTENTIOUS PERSONALLY. IT WAS BECOMING IMPOSSIBLE TO DEAL WITH HIM. SPEAKING IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE SOARES SAID HE FELT SA CARNEIRO'S RECENT ILLNESS HAD AFFECTED HIS PSYCHOLOGICAL OUTLOOK. HE POINTED TO SA CARNEIRO'S RECENT CONVERSATION WITH SENATOR MCGOVERN AA AN EXAMPLE OF SA CARNEIRO'S IRRATIONAL APPROACH (REFTEL B). MCGOVERN HAD TOLD SOARES SA CARNEIRO SOUNDED LIKE JOE MCCARTHY. (COMMENT: TRUE.)

6. SOARES SAID THAT IF SA CARNEIRO CONTINUES HIS INTRANSIGENCE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES WILL MISS SOME IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITIES. FOR EXAMPLE, EVERYBODY HAD NOW AGREED UPON DIRECT ELECTIONS OF THE PRESIDENT, AND EVERY MILITARY MAN SEEMED TO BE A CANDIDATE. POSSIBILITIES INCLUDED COSTA GOMES (SOARES WAS UNENTHUSIASTIC, AS WAS I), PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO, PIRES VELOSO, ALTINO DE MAGALHAES AND FIRMINO MIGUEL. GALVAO DE MELO WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY PUT HIMSELF UP, AS WELL, AND SPINOLA HAD TO BE CONSIDERED A POSSIBILITY. SOARES WAS BEING WOODED BY A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL CANDIDATES WHO REALIZE THAT THEY NEED SUPPORT FROM THE POLITICAL PARTIES TO WIN. IF THE PS AND THE PPD COULD AGREE, THEIR MAN WOULD AUTOMATICALLY BE ELECTED. YET SOARES FOUND HE WAS UNABLE TO TALK TO SA CARNEIRO ON SUBJECTS SUCH AS THIS. HE WONDERED IF I WOULD SPEAK TO SA CARNEIRO IN AN EFFORT TO PROMOTE A DIALOGUE.

7. I TOLD SOARES THAT SA CARNEIRO HAD AT LEAST ONE CANDIDATE IN MIND WHO I THOUGH MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE TO SOARES. SOARES ASKED IF IT WAS PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO. I SAID YES. AS FAR AS TALKING WITH SA CARNEIRO WAS CONCERNED, I INTENDED TO HAVE A GENERAL SESSION WITH HIM IN THE NEAR FUTURE. I WAS AN OUTSIDE OBSERVER AND COULD UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES INTERFERE IN INTERNAL POLITICS. AT THE SAME TIME IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THE INTERESTS OF DEMOCRACY WOULD BE BEST SERVED IF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES CONDUCTED THEIR CAMPAIGN ON A HIGH LEVEL AND AVOIDED PETTY FEUDING. I WOULD BE PREPARED TO EXPRESS A SIMILAR VIEW TO SA CARNEIRO.

8. SOARES EXPRESSED APPRECIATION AND ASSURED ME HE AND HIS PARTY WILL CONTINUE TO COLLABORATE CLOSELY WITH US. HE LOOKED FORWARD TO HIS VISIT TO THE US AND HOPED WE WOULD PROVIDE HIM WITH AS MUCH OPPORTUNITY AS POSSIBLE FOR SUBSTANTIVE
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CONVERSATIONS.
CARLUCCI

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ADDEES

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